



# News Release

200 - 1627 Fort Street Victoria BC V8R 1H8

Telephone **250.405.5151** FAX: 250.405.5155

Toll Free via Enquiry BC in Vancouver 604.660.2421. Elsewhere in BC **1.800.663.7867**

information@islandstrust.bc.ca [www.islandstrust.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca)

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## Islands Trust Council Approves 2018-2019 Budget

Salt Spring Island - The Islands Trust Council approved a budget of \$7.86 million for 2018-2019 at its March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on Salt Spring Island. Details of the approved budget are available on the Islands Trust [website](#).

"This budget allows Trust Council to maintain and improve service levels in a number of key areas," said Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. "The approved budget reflects input from trustees, staff, and the public. Thank you to everyone who provided input."

The approved budget includes a net increase of \$357,623 over the 2017-2018 budget and is supported by a 2% increase in revenue from property taxes (except for Bowen Island), as well as a draw from general reserve funds. This is the first property tax increase since 2012.

The Islands Trust Council is in the final year of a four-year term and many trust-wide and local trust committee projects are well underway. Funded initiatives include a temporary freshwater specialist position, a new program coordinator position, and on-going projects focused on ecosystem protection, First Nation relations, and public engagement. The budget also includes funding for local trust committee projects and for one-time initiatives such as necessary software and building upgrades and the administration of the 2018 local government elections. New and one-time initiatives are largely funded by either a transfer from the General Revenue Surplus Fund or from grants, while a Salt Spring Island special property tax requisition funds co-ordination of watershed management on Salt Spring Island.

"For any government, an election year is a time for renewal," said Luckham. "The current Trust Council feels that, working with our partner agencies, this budget puts us in a stable position to advance our mandate to preserve and protect the Islands Trust Area and to continue advocacy on the issues that unite all island communities."

Property owners within the Bowen Island Municipality will contribute \$293,463 in 2018-2019, an increase of \$50,783. As residents within the Islands Trust Area, Bowen Island taxpayers contribute a proportional share of the operating costs of Trust Council and the Trust Fund Board as defined by the provincial *Islands Trust Act* and by a provincially legislated formula based on property assessments.

The Islands Trust Council is a federation of local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and another 10,000 non-resident property-owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

### CONTACT

Peter Luckham  
Chair, Islands Trust Council  
250.210.2553

Julia Mobbs  
Director, Administrative Services  
250.405.5150

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Preserving **island** communities, culture and environment

Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis

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